

Mission work is essential, it was in the days of Christ, in the days of the apostles, in the days of the martyrs, it is just as essential today. Mission work is just as essential to the moral nature of man as air and light are to man's physical organization. The Word teaches that faith without works is dead, and a church professing to have faith in God, yet doing nothing for the cause of morality is a dead church. She may have a magnificent pile of brick or stone, bright lights and cushioned seats, paid choirs and high sounding creed, but lacking the spirit of Christ and neglecting the work of extending His kingdom, there is death and not life, and how many organizations are there, having the form and lacking the power of godliness.

Mission work is divided by many into home and foreign work. One is as essential as the other, for one cannot succeed without the other. If one fails the other will also. A church member had a horse he called his missionary horse; one side he called home missions, and the other side he called foreign missions. When home missions moved forward foreign missions moved likewise. The illustration contains a truth not to be gainsayed; one line of work is linked with the other, and like the Siamese twins, what touches the vitality of one is felt by the other. It is true that "charity begins at home," but true charity does remain at home with closed windows and barred doors. The charity that is from above, "seeketh not her own." Those churches that are prospering today, are the churches that are earnest and faithful in unfolding the mission idea Christ brought to earth and planted in the minds and hearts of his followers and caused them to present their bodies "a living sacrifice."

Mission work is not confined to simply making Christ known but it includes a development of the seed planted by the Holy Ghost. It not only means getting men into the church, but in training them that they may "grow in grace and knowledge" of the Master. It not only means transplanting, but full development. A medical doctor said to me, "you preachers are so busy saving sinners that you haven't time to make men better." I am afraid there is much truth in the assertion, we are not only to save men, but we are to make men better. Said a gentleman, "I shall join the church; she never interferes with a man's religion nor politics." Some churches are more silent on religion than on politics. Men and women are to be brought to Christ and prepared for ploughing, seed sowing, or reaping as the case may be. True mission work includes the life work of the soul for eternal bliss.

Mission workers are to keep in view two great facts: First, the ability of God to save; secondly, the willingness of God to save. When the leper came to him he said: "If thou wilt thou canst make me clean. He did not doubt the ability of God to clean; he was not just certain that he was willing, hence he threw himself on his mercy and was made clean. God is both able and willing to save, just as able as he is willing, and just as willing as he is able, and no one is so far gone but what the grace of God can save him. If science can take a filthy rag and clean it and make from it a sheet of white paper on which pure thoughts may be recorded, how much more can God take a filthy heart and clean it until in it may be found the hope of glory. As the woman searched with ungloved hand in the gutter of the street until she found the valuable ring she had lost, so must the mission workers grapple amid the filth of this world for lost souls, relying on the ability and willingness of God to save.

This coming into touch with the lost, on the part of the mission worker is one secret of success. You may remember reading Uncle Tom's Cabin; Miss Ophelia was much interested in saving the heathen; she had given her that quaint character, Topsy, but had failed to bring about a conversion; Miss Phelia had the shivers when Topsy came near her; DeClair took in the situation and in a conversation with the lady, told her of a truth his mother once stated, that was, if we would do others good, we must do as the Master in dealing with those around him, get near enough to touch them. Here is a secret of success, getting close enough to others to touch them; Christ touched the most loathsome. He loved them enough to save them, and the church is to represent Christ, and she must represent him in searching for the poor and needy and bringing them back to life and health and happiness. There is divine magnetism in the church. Let others feel its saving power.

The Brethren church is a mission church. For this reason she is going on to perfection; she has gone out into the highways and proclaimed the healing Christ, she has gone into the cellars and garrets and helped the poor, she stands at the cross roads and the steamboat wharfs making known the right direction, she walks the streets and visits the depots showing the path of life, she draws water from salvation's well for the wilderness pilgrims and prepares a table for the hungry traveler. Through her churches, her mission channels, her women's work, the young people, her printing presses, she is making known the whole truth, and hence in spite of this world's God, and the sneers of her foes she is succeeding. Her borders are hourly extending, her ministry is growing, her membership is increasing, Christ is being honored and God glorified. "And of Zion it shall be said, this and that man was born in her, and the highest himself shall establish her. The Lord shall count, when he writeth up the people, that this man was born there. Selah."

Carleton, Nebraska.

SUNDAY SCHOOL WORK.

BY C. F. YODER.

"And thou shalt teach it to thy children." Deut. 6:7 "Search the Scriptures." John 5:39.

"What is truth?" said Pilate, and the philosophers of

all ages have compassed heaven and earth to find a reply. "Thy Word is truth," said Jesus Christ, and the testimony of the ages proves it.

Revealed from heaven unto men only to be obscured by degrees of councils and bulls of popes, still God's word is mighty and shall yet prevail. When mediæval night was merging into the morning of the reformation, it was for Luther indeed to re-open the door of truth, but it remained for Robert Raikes, the founder of the Sunday school, to lead God's people in. When the Gospel once more came into contact with the masses, its inherent power for good shattered the bulwarks of corruption and gave to man a new start in his evolutions heavenward. In this work the Sunday school has played an increasingly important part because it brings the word of God, "which maketh wise unto salvation," face to face with the individual without the intermediate interpretation of priest or pope, which cursed the middle ages. But it takes reforms long to permeate the masses, and even today when the earth is dotted with Sunday schools as the vault of heaven is decked with stars, the last trace of this ancient pessimism has not yet disappeared.

Our mother church originated (1708) in the third or pietistic era of the reformation, (as divided by Schaff,) and was a pioneer in Sunday school work. And twenty years before Robert Raikes (1780) had hired his four dames at a shilling apiece to teach his first collection of Gloucester's neglected, one, Ludwig Hacker, opened a Sunday school in Ephrata, Lancaster county, Pennsylvania, for the German Baptists, popularly known as Dunkards. But in the reaction this early piety returned in a measure to the dead orthodoxy it had opposed, and not until the recent reformation did the spirit of Sunday school work again revive.

The Brethren church originating at this time has given increasing attention to this work, publishing its own literature, but using the international lessons and working in harmony with other churches in general conventions. We believe that the Gospel alone can meet the spiritual wants of the world, and that without addition of apostolic traditions, creeds, or disciplines, it is sufficient as a guide in the performance of duties to God, and man, and hence we bid God-speed to every effort to promulgate a knowledge of the Gospel unto the uttermost ends of the earth.

The Bible alone presents the perfect example, and as men by "beholding" are "transformed into the same image," it follows that members of the kingdom of heaven are alike in all denominations, and when once the spirit of the Gospel is diffused, Christ's prayer for unity will be realized, and the theological fences which are to be so greatly regretted today will wax and wane.

The Sunday school, thank God, is hastening on this blessed consummation. Then let its work be a personal study of the Bible and not of its boundless truths as ground through the intellectual mill of some one else. The tendency of Sunday school quarterlies and lesson leaves to usurp the place of the Bible in the class is to be deplored. These helps have fulfilled their end when they have presented such facts as will aid one to understand the true import of the lesson. A knowledge of ancient customs, circumstances of the lesson and contemporaneous events is to be desired, but should be acquired outside of the class, so that the brief time there may be devoted to an elucidation of those truths which will affect the present lives of the pupils. Let it ever be remembered that the ultimate object of the Sunday school is the salvation of souls. With this work the elevation of the community and of the world follows as a matter of course.

The church therefore, and the Sunday school should co-operate in the accomplishment of this common end. The church can do no better work than to establish a Sunday school at some weak mission point, which will in turn establish a church. The process to be repeated *ad infinitum*. This plan has been widely and successfully operated in the past, because of the popularity of the Sunday school in frontier places, and because converts of the Sunday school are more permanent than those reached through the emotions alone.

The Sunday school, therefore, is not to take the place of the church, but the church being the body, the missionary and Bible societies her feet, which run to carry her message, the young people's society the reserve force, or left arm, so the Sunday school is the right arm to put forth the sword of the spirit into the face of an ungodly world. Every Christian should therefore labor to extend its usefulness.

This is to be done, (1) by increasing its spirituality and thus augmenting its power, and (2) by extending the range of this influence.

The first must be accomplished by making the school more attractive,—not only by having a cheery room with mottoes, pictures, United States flag, etc., but by order, punctuality, good music, use of blackboard and by practical teaching. Of necessity the true teacher is a true Christian. Rewards are good, but are justifiable only until the child is old enough to do right because it is right. Banners likewise, but with these as with all the above, where advantage is taken of ambition or pride, care is required that the last and greatest influence be not lost sight of, and that is spirituality. Nothing can replace consecrated teachers and officers.

To reach the greatest number, begin by getting the boys off the fence and out of the buggies, and the visitors off the back seats, into the classes.

Personal missionary work among friends and neighbors will also be profitable, and a great deal of good may be done by preserving quarterlies or papers to send to poor schools, or families, or to prisons, etc.

Before the eyes of the zealous worker many avenues of success will open. Conventions, township, county, state, national and international are doing a grand work, and every school should, as far as possible, co-operate,

that yet greater and grander results may be attained.

The Sunday school has a mission in the world. God alone knows what awaits it in the future, but its present blessings are manifest, in aiding to keep holy the Sabbath day and attracting to church many who would not otherwise attend, and thus enlarging the field of Christian activity, and at the same time putting idle talents out "at usury," for he that manageth a Sunday school class of small boys is verily greater than he that manœuvrèth an army. But its greatest blessing has ever been and ever shall be the dissemination of an unadulterated Gospel among the masses, for history and experience prove that this alone is the sovereign remedy for every human woe, that this alone can save us from the mighty evils which have grappled humanity by the throat.

Then speed thee, O Sunday school, angel of God, bearing "the everlasting Gospel" to the limits of earth, for close on thy wake the second angel sounds, "Lo Babylon is fallen, is fallen" and the third takes up the echo "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ."

Even so, till the Sunday school of earth be wafted above and we sit down as learners at the feet of the Master in the Sunday school of God.

Morrill, Kansas.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S WORK.

BY H. M. LICHTY.

Is this a new work? Or is it a new way of doing the same old work? Has a religious Proctor with powerful lenses in the last decade discovered vast fields of unexplored regions in the great sphere of Christian work? Or has an Edison in this service simply discovered new powers, invented new machinery whereby the same old work is done? Yes and no can be answered to both of these questions. It is the same work of establishing Christ's kingdom down here on earth at which the good people have labored for centuries, and the same forces and the same methods are being used. But then through the active work of the Young People's Societies have been discovered many new fields, which, while ripe for the harvest, have never seen a reaper, and through their systematic labors they have invented wonderful machinery and utilized powerful forces which have heretofore been dormant and unknown.

It is but little over a decade since the Y. P. S. C. E. was organized. It now has a membership of one and one-half million. The Epworth League and the Baptist Union and other similar young people's societies have as many members more. The real active Christian work done by these societies borders on the miraculous. We who have been in the work for years stand aghast and ask, "How long yet for the world's salvation?" "Will this last?" "Am I too old for the work?" The field is the world and the beginning has hardly been made for its conversion. The easy part is to organize men and equip them for battle when they are loyal patriots. This part of the work is being done, but the same increase in members and force can not be expected. The system inaugurated is intended to employ in Christian service the young. Its regular organized work is two-fold. First to build up and develop the membership in the church and second to go out and lead others to the cross. Do you wish to do active work for the Master? The Young People's Society will give you strength. Do you wish to earnestly study the Bible? Then it will be well to fall in line with this mighty current which is doing so much in that line. Do you wish to go on errands for the Master? There are the great fields and the mazy streets, there are the dingy garrets and the musty cellars; if you "feel as young as ever," and can climb the stairs to the garrets or venture down into the dens of vice and iniquity, you are young enough to do "young people's work." Some are too old for such work at twenty; others are young enough at sixty. Remember that the work is for the young people, and if you are old and zealous for the cause that you can do a world of good by remaining at home in secret prayer for the success of the cause.

The young people in some of the congregations of the Brethren church have been organized under the name of "The King's Children."

The help that can be desired by the pastor in his labors both in and out of his pulpit by the superintendent of the Sunday school in his efforts to build up the cause cannot be estimated. It is to be hoped that it will be but a short time until an organization of "King's Children" will be considered just as essential to the prosperity of every congregation in the brotherhood as a Sunday School is today.

But where lies the secret of this great success? One says it is in the weekly prayer-meeting and monthly consecration meeting. Another says it is due to the organized effort of the committee work. Both are no doubt right. If you do not yet have such an organization in your congregation supply yourself with Y. P. S. C. E. literature.